

THE NUR AF SHAN

Vol. IX

LUDHIANA:—January 20th, 1905.

No. 3.

FOREIGN TELEGRAMS.

London, Jan. 11.

The Kaiser, in asking the Tsar's and Mikado's assent to bestow the Order of Merit on Generals Stoessel and Nogi, respectively, telegraphed to the Tsar: "The defence of Port Arthur will ever be an example to the soldiers of all nations. The hero commanding your faithful troops is admired by the whole world and especially by my army and myself. I am conferring the same honor on his brave opponent." His Majesty telegraphed to the Mikado: "The siege of Port Arthur has shown General Nogi to be a brave and prudent commander, whose heroic deeds and those of his troops will ever be admired by all soldiers and especially by myself and my army. His brave opponent is receiving the same distinction."

The Tsar replied that he highly appreciated the sympathy of the Kaiser and his army. General Stoessel had gallantly done his duty to the end at the head of his brave garrison.

The Mikado replied: "Much obliged for your Majesty's admiration of the capture of Port Arthur and assent with pleasure to your Majesty's kind wish to confer on General Nogi the highest distinction in the Prussian army."

London, Jan. 12.

Great Britain has rejected the Turkish Imde of the 1st instant regarding the Aden Hinterland, and insists on a settlement on the basis of the assurances previously given.

M. Taillandier, the French Minister embarked at Tangier yesterday *en route* for Fez via Larache. The Sultan is powerless to guarantee safety by the direct route from Tangier to Fez.

London, Jan. 12.

General Nogi reports that 546 guns were captured at Port Arthur, 82,670 shells, 30,000 kilogrammes of powder and 2, 266, 800 rifle rounds.

London, Jan. 13.

Russia has sent a circular to the Powers complaining of China's violations of neutrality since the war began, and claiming the right to act according to her own interests in the matter of China's neutrality.

The whole of the Russian cavalry, recently formed into one enormous force under General Mitchenko, is displaying considerable activity. A detachment has damaged the railway between Ashanchan and Haicheng and Yenkow and Tashichao on the Japanese line of communications.

Bombay, Jan. 13.

Mr. Hayashi, Consul for Japan, communicates the following telegram received this morning from his Government:—On Thursday General Nogi reports that the delivery at Port Arthur has been completed, and the principal captures are as follows:—Permanent forts, 59; guns, 546, whereof those of large calibre number 54, of medium calibre, 149; and of small calibre 343; cannon balls, 82,670; ammunition, 30,000 rifles 35,252, horses, 1,920; battleships, 4, except the *Sevastopol*, which was entirely sunk; cruisers, 2; gunboats and destroyers, 14; steamers 10, besides small steamers, 35 of which are usable after small repairs.

London, Jan. 13.

Admiral Btrowsky's supplementary squadron has left Suix. Reuter's correspondent, wiring from Tokio, says that an official report, dated the 12th instant, states that the Japanese cavalry on Wednesday morning encountered four Russian squadrons to the south-west of Liaoyang, whom they repulsed, with heavy losses after a four hours' fight.

Two thousand Russian cavalry attacked Ninchwang the same afternoon. The Japanese retired, but were subsequently reinforced and drove off the enemy, whom they are still pursuing.

Eight Russian squadrons and an infantry regiment and twelve guns surrounded a commissariat station at Nin-chia-tung, to the north of Yingkow, on the 12th, but were repulsed, losing at least eighty men. Steps are being taken to intercept the raiders' retreat.

General Stoessel bade farewell to the troops at Port Arthur today. He thanked all for their heroic defence, and said that the Japanese terms were the best he could obtain. He accepted all the blame for the surrender.

London, Jan. 14.

The Japanese have formally entered Port Arthur, detachments of all arms marching to the sound of the bugle to the old and new town.

The *Times* correspondent at Tokio says that the surrender of Port Arthur is inexplicable. There were no signs of privations there and the prisoners number upwards of 24,000 excluding sick and wounded.

London, Jan. 14.

Reuter's correspondent at Tokio says that the Russians left 62 killed and six wounded at Ninchwang. Their total casualties there and at Ninchnetan are estimated at 300 and the Japanese at sixteen. The Japanese stores and magazines were not damaged.

London, Jan. 15.

Reuter's correspondent at Tokio says that the Russian Note to the Powers regarding China's neglect of the neutrality laws is regarded there as absurd, seeing that the Russian cavalry raid was made in Chinese territory. It is felt that China's weakness and constant failure to enforce neutrality must relieve Japan of her obligation to observe restrictions which Russia herself ignores. Japan must protect herself against a repetition of raids whose success would be due to the violation of neutral territory.

London, Jan. 16.

Activity is being resumed along the Sha-ho, where the Japanese are heavily bombarding the Russian positions on both sides of the railway. The weather is warmer, favouring a resumption of operations.

An independent account of General Mitchenko's daring raid shows that it was wholly unsuccessful, the cavalry being powerless against the entrenched Japanese infantry.

Calcutta, Jan. 17.

Chinese coolies have refused to work on the Rand mines. The situation is serious.

Germany is entering on a tremendous labour struggle; 260,000 miners in the Ruhr district having struck work.

London, Jan. 17.

Reuter's correspondent, wiring from Peking, says it is reported that the Dalai Lama is leaving Urga for Kiakhta.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"Call nothing common—
The daisies in the meadows shine
Inspiring thoughts and hopes divine
A gift of grace.
Call no man common—
In lowly lives Jehovah dwells
Therefore the heart with gladness
And seeks His face" [awells.

Our Christian friends, who read the *Arya Patrika*, have, no doubt, been somewhat amused at the vain endeavour of the editor to convince his readers of the futility of Christian Missions. We say "vain endeavour" because every reader can easily see that the editor is himself by no means assured as to the truth of his own statements; but, like the stalwart pleader in a bad case, he makes up for his want of argument by furious eloquence and a hysterical gesticulation. With the impregnable argument of facts confronting him, he vainly endeavours to argue them away; but, when all is said, there the figures stand, figures made not by the missionaries, but by the census officers of a government, which has no purpose beyond getting at the facts in the case. Those figures will stand the scrutiny of every reasonable man and will tell of substantial progress in the missionary work during the decade which they review.

It may be asked, why are the Aryas so insistent upon persuading the public that Christianity is making no progress, that it is absurd, and that it never can succeed in the face of the vastly superior Vedic Dharma? One would think that with this conviction they would be able to ignore the futile efforts of the missionaries, instead of lying awake at night to think of ways to head off the Christian work.

"Apropos to the above statement, we find in the *Arya Messenger* of Jan. 13th the following:

"Dear Sir, From the perusal of the reports of the last census operations, it appears that the number of Christians is increasing; while that of the Hindus, the children of the soil, is decreasing day by day. There are fewer marriages among Christians than Hindus who marry early. The leaders of the Hindu nations should lose no time in taking proper steps to enquire into the true causes.

"I am sending you a book showing the absurdities of Christianity. You can review it in your columns, if you have no objection, and then advise the Tract Society of the Arya Samaj to write a small tract in Hindi and Gur-

mukhi on the lines of this book. Such pamphlets in Hindi and Gurmukhi should be distributed extensively, to prevent the under-spread of Christianity."

It seems to me our friends of the Arya Samaj would do well to heed the advice given by the Gaekwar of Baroda at the Social Conference held in Bombay recently. Speaking of the religious movements among Hindus in their relation to social reform, His Highness remarked that: "There have been great religious movements, the Brahma Samaj breaking boldly away from Hinduism and building up a new community, full of the modern spirit; the Arya Samaj seeking to reform society and religion, but clinging to a nationalistic basis". He goes on to say further on: "There is, of course, some truth in the position that reform must work along lines natural to the country and our national characteristics. * * * It is also true that servile imitation is no reform and is often more useless than the original evil. *It matters nothing where the truth comes from. If it serves a national purpose or helps national ends, then it is national whether the form in which we find it is modern or vedic, European or purely Indian. And we must be eager to find this knowledge and apply it whether it has the sanction of the older ideas or not, we have to look the future of India. We are not going to revive the past. What we need now is action—common sense practical measures and not discussion as to whether this or that reform is justified by older traditions or the sacred writings of our ancestors.*"

Let these very sound principles of patriotic reform be applied to religion, and the Arya Samaj may find in Christianity that which it needs to satisfy the spiritual hunger of India's people.

TRUST.

When in the hour of dire extremity,
I fix my troubled thoughts, dear Lord, on Thee,
Thou calm'st them as Thou did'st the stormy sea.
And when alone and wakeful in the night,
When earth seems small and trivial in my sight,
Thou givest songs of sweetness and of light.
When in my solitude, I turn to gaze
In Thy dear eyes, that silent, bless my ways,
My heart is filled with gratitude and praise.
Praise to Thee, Lord, for my unanswered prayers,
That saved my soul from many evil snares,
Into which I had ventured unawares.
So, as I journey on, day after day,
Thy blessings rich are showered on my way,
My feet are guided, when they fain would stray.
Oh, Everlasting Arms! encircle me,
And bear me safely o'er Life's restless sea,
Into the haven of eternity.

Letters To My Neighbours.

No. 3

Dear Friends,

In reply to your desire to learn my views in regard to the evils of the caste system, I desire to say, that making due allowance for all the advantages claimed for caste, I am sure the disadvantages are so grave as to entirely overshadow all the benefits claimed. May I here remind you that opposition to caste has not originated with Christians; for, while it is true that the Christian principle of universal love, growing out of a belief in the Fatherhood of God and the unity and brotherhood of the human family, is absolutely opposed to the Hindu caste system, nevertheless, as a matter of experience, Christians in India have been ready enough to fall in with the caste prejudices of their neighbours and even to perpetuate caste among themselves. The most serious opposition to caste, known to history, was the reform of Buddha, which for many centuries seemed to have gained supremacy in India. That movement, as you know, rejected the caste system. It was regarded as the strong chain of oppression, forged by the Brahmin priesthood for the express purpose of securing and perpetuating their dominion over the minds and consciences of the Hindu people.

Other reform movements of more modern times, like that of Kabir and Nanak, of Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Swami Dayanand have also opposed the caste system. Perhaps, no one has ever arraigned the caste system and so fearlessly denounced its evils as the present Gackwar of Baroda in his recent address at the social congress held in Bombay.

The reasons, generally put forward in support of the Hindu caste system, are briefly set forth by the late Dr. John Murdoch in his book on Caste (*Published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras*) as follows:—

(1) The division of labour required by the caste system tends to a greater excellence in the various arts—the son inheriting the acquired skill of his father. (2) Caste secures to every man the protection of a large family or *Biradari*. (3) It promotes cleanliness. (4) It cultivates respect for authority; and finally (5) It affords a great moral restraint.

Over against these, however, by no means unquestionable advantages of caste, may be set forth the following great disadvantages: (1) Physical degeneracy, owing to the narrow family bounds within which marriage is permissible, (2) A much more serious evil is its influence upon national progress. It restricts intercourse among the nations both in and outside of India. It degrades labour—the artisans and labouring classes being relegated to a low and dishonourable place in the social scale. (3) In like manner and for similar reasons intellectual progress is hindered. Everyone knows that the greatest advances in intellectual life are now being made by those Hindus, who have broken over the caste bounds and who have dared to cross the seas to learn the secrets of Western science and knowledge.

(4) Again, if we inquire what it is that stands in the way of social reform, opposing it at every step, we shall find that it is the caste system, which has arrogated to itself the high place of being the religion of the Hindus. It practically says, 'No caste, no Hinduism.' A Hindu may believe anything, but that will not affect his right to be a member of the *biradari*: he may do any wickedness under heaven and it will not affect his claim to recognition as a member of the Hindu world—only he must not break his caste. A morsel of bread or a drop of water from the hand of a man of forbidden caste and out he goes! Such is the claim of caste.

(5) But the most serious evil of caste lies in its crushing

out individual liberty. No man can be independent and remain in Hindu society. The dictates of common sense and of conscience alike have no place, if they cross the laws of caste. Under such circumstances, how impossible is national progress. Every man is limited in his influence. The nation is divided between classes. Education is hampered. I might adduce many more reasons for believing that the influence of caste upon India is evil, and that the nation can never rise to a high place among the nations of the world, so long as it exists.

To my mind, therefore those Indians who have set themselves against the caste system and who are striving to break it down are among the best friends of India and are inspired by a noble patriotism.

They have before them a long and hard struggle but victory is sure to reward their labours. It is because every Christian believes that caste is the enemy of progress in India, that he is using all the influence in his power to oppose it.

With best wishes for India's progress.

I am yours very sincerely. SENEX.

THE SIMPLE LIFE.

The American President, Mr. Roosevelt, last week introduced to a Washington audience Dr. Wagner, who has published a book on "The Simple Life." Wagner is said to have many of the traits of Thoreau. Thoreau, it will be remembered, went through Harvard, but refused to receive his diploma, saying that a piece of lettered sheepskin would add nothing to his knowledge. His life was the simplest possible, but none has given a more charming view and interpretation of nature than he.

Dr. Wagner has applied the rule of simplicity and sincerity in his book, and has properly interpreted the strenuous life as put by President Roosevelt in his book under that title. More than a thousand years ago Alfred the Great of England said: "It is not wise for man to seek too soft a life." Many have taken simplicity to mean softness and enervation, and strenuousness to mean feverishness and restless adventure. Neither is true. The simple life means strenuous endeavor to meet the true ideals, to be helpful of others, void of mean envy, and to use exertion to found, build and maintain a home. These Wagner calls the substance and not the show of things.

Senator Stanford once entered upon an examination of the things necessary to his comfort and existence and found that he could supply these all on an income of \$40 a month. He was himself far from being an inconspicuous example of the simple life. Being entirely without the ostentation of ownership he moved among his vast possessions in such an attitude that, to the stranger, the foreman, the superintendent and even the ambitious groom who cared for his horses of world-wide celebrity seemed more the owners than he.

It is not in any special division of society that we must look for the simple life. It is found everywhere. It lives in the heart and mind and disposition more than in the artificial surroundings. There is no doubt that the American people have been going away from simplicity in life for more than forty years. The process seems to have started in the Civil War. That war fixed the national thought on glory and pomp and circumstance. Gradually the difference between use and vain show grew less distinct and living for appearances spread through all parts of society, an iridescent but an evil wave. The maxims of Ben Franklin, which were a positive influence during the first three quarters of our national existence, were lost sight of, and keeping up appearances became of more seeming im-



portance than seeking the true happiness by being sincere.

Now a turn of the tide is felt. We believe that this turn is due more to President Roosevelt than to any other single individual. He has seen every phase of life and in all his public addresses which touch its great issues he recurs again and again to the simple, independent and contented conditions which are the genuine substance of things. So he has said: "It remains true now as it has always been that in the last resort the country districts are those in which we are surest to find the old American habits of thought and ways of living. Conditions in the country have changed far less than they have in the cities, and in consequence there has been little breaking away from the methods of life which have produced the great majority of the leaders of the republic in the past. Almost all of our great Presidents were brought up in the country, and most of them worked hard on farms in their youth and got their early mental training in the healthy democracy of farm life. The countryman, the man on the farm, more than any other of our citizens to-day, is called upon continually to exercise the qualities which we think of as typical of the United States through all its history—the qualities of rugged independence, masterful resolution and individual energy and resourcefulness. The man who tills his own farm, whether on the prairie or in the woodland, who grows what we eat and the raw material which is worked up into what we wear, still exists more nearly under the conditions which obtained when 'the embattled farmers' of '76 made this country a nation than is true of any others of our people."

These and numerous other expressions by the President explain the sympathy between him and Dr. Wagner, which brought them together before an audience in Washington. They explain also the obvious change in the direction of thought and practice that is being felt all over the country. There is everywhere a turning away from show and shadow. The great intellectual organizations of the country, and especially the women's clubs, are accelerating this movement. The tawdry and garish in dress and decoration are passing away. Soon architecture and all art will feel the new impulse. It will penetrate the colleges and common schools. The education of the people will lose its gewgawry and go back to the necessary and substantial. Life will lose in glare but will gain in comfort. Then a host of evils will disappear. The simple life is a remedy for the divorce evil. It will exterminate more diseases than medicine can cure and will come nearer abolishing poverty than any of the artificial schemes for reorganizing society.

The subject is not a bad Sunday study nor an indifferent theme for Sunday sermons. It may well enlist the interest of the secular press and become a fascinating subject for the lecture platform.

DOGS IN POLAR REGIONS.

Dogs are undeniably the most useful animals for man in his polar expeditions, where sledges must be dragged over the ice of the Polar sea. They have the advantage, also, that, unlike horses and reindeer, they readily eat their fellows. Their weight is small, and they can be easily carried on light boats or on ice floes. As the Danish government has forbidden the exportation of dogs from Greenland, explorers usually get their dogs from Western Siberia.—Chicago News.

Perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which can not be overcome when they are together, yield themselves up when taken little by little.—Plutarch.

DR. ORR ON THE INCARNATION.

The *Bombay Guardian* gives the following extract from Dr. Orr's lectures on "The Christian view of God and the world as centering in the Incarnation."

In Christianity, as nowhere else, the severed portions of truth found in all other systems are organically united, while it completes the body of truth by discoveries peculiar to itself. The Christian doctrine of God, for example, may fairly claim to be the synthesis of all the separate elements of truth found in Agnosticism, Pantheism, and Deism, which by their very antagonisms reveal themselves as one-sidednesses, requiring to be brought into some higher harmony. If Agnosticism affirms that there is that in God—in His infinite and absolute existence—which transcends finite comprehension, Christian theology does the same. If Pantheism affirms the absolute immanence of God in the world, and Deism His absolute transcendence over it, Christianity unites the two sides of the truth in a higher concept, maintaining at the same time the Divine immanence and the Divine transcendence. Even Polytheism in its nobler forms is in its own dark way a witness for a truth which a hard, abstract Monotheism, such as we have in the later (not the Biblical) Judaism, and in Mohammedanism, ignores—the truth, namely, that God is plurality as well as unity—that in Him there is a manifoldness of life, a fulness and diversity of powers and manifestations, such as is expressed by the word Elohim. This element of truth in Polytheism Christianity also takes up, and sets in its proper relation to the unity of God in its doctrine of Trinity—the concept of God which is distinctively the Christian one, and which furnishes the surest safeguard of a living Theism against the extremes of both Pantheism and Deism. Optimism and Pessimism are another pair of contrasts—each in abstraction an error, yet each a witness for a truth which the other overlooks, and Christianity is the reconciliation of both. To take a last example, Positivism is a very direct negation of Christianity; yet in its strange "worship of Humanity" is there not that which stretches across the gulf and touches hands with a religion which meets the cravings of the heart for the *human* in God by the doctrine of the Incarnation? It is the province of a true and wise Christian theology to take account of all this, and to seek with ever-increasing enlargement of vision, the comprehensive view in which all factors of the truth are combined. The practical inference I would draw—the very opposite of that drawn by others from the same premises—is, that it is the unwise way possible of dealing with Christianity to pare it down, or seek to sublimate it away, as if it had no positive content of its own; or, by lavish compromise and concession, to part with that which belongs to its essence. It is not in a blunted and toned-down Christianity, but in the exhibition of the Christian view in the greatest fulness and completeness possible that the ultimate synthesis of the conflicting elements in the clash of systems round us is to be found.

DEATH OF MRS. TIMOTHY RICHARD

It is with very deep regret that we announce the death of Mrs. Mary Martin Richard, which took place at 5 A. M. on Friday from cancer. Mrs. Richard came originally from Edinburgh, and had been one of the governesses in the Merchant Company's College Schools. She married Dr. Timothy Richard in 1878, and in all kinds of work no wife ever entered more fully into the plans of her husband or helped him more efficiently than she did. They lived first at Taiyuanfu and the recollection of the good they did there still survives. She had a school of thirty famine orphans in the city, and superintended several others schools in the country. She visited the wives of the officials, telling them of the wonders of Christianity and of Western civilization, and translated Christian biographies, of which she published ten small volumes in 1900. When in Peking, she taught English to sons of high mandarins, as well as to the son of the Japanese Minister, and two Japanese Legation Secretaries. In Tientsin she trained Bible women, some of whom afterwards became eminent leaders in the Christian Church. In Shanghai she taught English in the families of high mandarins, and took a leading part in getting the Christian women of China to present the Empress Dowager with a copy of the New Testament in 1894, herself writing the letter which accompanied the book. She was a lady of very high attainments and culture, and had a very extensive knowledge of the theory and practice of music. She was one of the Editors for some years of "Woman's Work in the Far East," and edited some of the early numbers of our magazine, *The East of Asia*. Her amiable qualities had made her a very large circle of friends, foreign and Chinese, and it may be mentioned as a singular mark of their regard, that many influential and wealthy Chinese called at her residence on Friday to express their condolence. Her premature death at the age of 59, after long suffering borne with exemplary patience, is a very bitter blow to her husband and her four daughters, with whom the most genuine sympathy is felt.

Early as was the hour fixed for the funeral of Mrs. Richard, so universal was the esteem felt for her, and sympathy with the bereaved husband, that the Bubbling Well Road Cemetery Chapel was crowded on Saturday morning with sorrowing friends. Many local officials paid their tribute of respect by attending, among them Mr. R. W. Mansfield (Acting Consul-General), Mr. R. E. Bredon (Deputy Inspector-General of Customs), Mr. H. E. Hobson (Commissioner of Customs), and Mr. W. G. Bayne (Chairman of the Council). Nearly all the missionaries now in Shanghai were present as well as many Chinese, among whom were H. E. Ho Taotai and family. Had there been time to send invitations many other Chinese would no doubt have attended. The flowers sent were many and beautiful. A short address, in which he spoke of the culture of the late Mrs. Richard, as well as her abundant success as a missionary, was delivered by the Rev. C. E. Darwent.

Mrs. Richard translated:

1. The Dairyman's Daughter.
2. Part of Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living.
3. How to Pass the Great Examination.
4. Lord Northbrook's Sayings of Jesus.
5. Prof. Goodspeed's Messianic Hopes of the Jews.
6. The words of Handel's Messiah.

The Anthems in the Congregational Hymn Book.

7. Christian Biography in ten small volumes.

Besides these translations she wrote:

8. A Chinese Tune Book in native notation.
9. An English Pamphlet on Chinese Music.
10. A Dialogue in Chinese on True Christianity.

In addition to the above she had extensive correspondence at home and in China to promote the interests of the Diffusion Society, and often spent many days at the office to assist in detailed work.—From the *North China Daily News*, Shanghai, for July 11th and 13th, 1903.

HOW A KING.

WAS SAVED BY A WOMAN'S WIT.

BY FRED MYRON COLBY.

There is a beautiful province in central Sweden, lying north of the great lakes, called Dalcarnia, or in the Swedish tongue Dalarne. It abounds with streams and lakes, and many of the hills are covered with woods. There are also large tracts of swampland that have a thick forest growth. Among the hills are rich copper mines, some of which have been worked for more than six hundred years.

The people of this romantic and sylvan country are among the hardest and most independent peasantry in Europe. They are fond of equality, and have never in the history of Sweden bowed to tyranny. Their hospitality is unbounded.

Darkness was just falling upon the valleys lying round the Stora Kopparburg (big copper hills) one November night more than three hundred and fifty years ago, when a stout, muscular man, a bonder, or farmer, who had been clearing wood in the forest, shouldered his ax and taking his sheepskin coat upon his arm, prepared to go down to his home in the valley. He had scarcely gone a dozen steps when a voice hailed him.

"Holla, there! Canst thou tell me if I am on the right road to Falun?"

The stranger was a young man, tall and active, dressed in the same style of clothes as the bonder wore—that is to say, heavy wooden shoes, gratered hose, a leathern jacket, and a skin cap over his dark, shining hair. But there was something in his air and in the tone of his voice that indicated acquaintance with the great world, and it was this that struck the bonder's ears unfavorably.

"If thou followest me thou wilt be on thy way to Falun," the latter answered rather ungraciously.

"Take the thanks of a poor wayfarer for thy courtesy," said the stranger, as he advanced and walked beside the bonder. "I feared I had lost my way. How far may it be to my journey's end?"

The bonder looked keenly at his companion. There was something in the flashing dark eyes and lofty brow of the stranger that impressed him against his will.

"Falun lies a good dozen miles from here, and there's the river to be crossed. It will be dark and stormy before midnight. Wilt thou not tarry with me?"

"Nay; I am on urgent business, and friends, whom I must not disappoint, are awaiting me there."

Then pausing a moment, his keen eyes looking the bonder through and through, he asked: "Friend, what dost thou think of this Danish tyranny?"

"Swedish or Danish, it matters little to me," answered the other, guardedly.

But thou hadst rather be a freeman than a slave, hadst thou not?"

"Olaf Larson is a slave to no man," returned the bonder, straightening himself proudly. "We men of Dalcarnia serve no tyrants."

"Yet Christian of Denmark would enslave them," said



the stranger. "Already he hath seized the crown and the treasury, and to-day I have been told that not a week back he had six hundred of the greatest nobles of the land executed, so that none might stand in the way of his tyranny. Shall we endure such wrongs as these? Must our ancient Sweden submit to the tyranny of such a Nero?"

"Who will lead us should there be an uprising?" asked the bonder. "Nay, I knew of one, but he is an exile, and may now be dead. Were he alive!"

"I come from him," said the other, quickly. "He has not forgotten his country's wrongs. For months he has been among your Dalecarlian mountains, with a price set upon his head, working in your mines and herding with your bonders. But now the time has come to strike."

"But how shall I know that thou art a true man, and not an emissary of the Danes?" asked the man, suspiciously.

"I think thou wilt know me presently," replied the other, calmly. "Give me thy good ax, friend. Ah, it is of extra weight and finely tempered, too, I ween. Did'st ever know of another man who could strike a blow like this?"

Where they stood a stout, knotty log of hickory lay near them on the ground, a log well seasoned and somewhat more than two feet thick. As he spoke the stranger raised the ax, and with a mighty stroke clove the log in twain, half burying the ax in the earth beneath.

The next moment the man was upon his knees, bowing his head to the ground.

"Thou art Vasa himself," he cried. "Pardon me, sire."

"Rise, my friend, rise," said the future liberator of Sweden. "Yes, I am Vasa, the only living descendant of thy ancient kings. I have spoilt the edge of thy good ax. To-morrow, however, if thou wilt come to Falun, I will buy thee a sword to take its place. Is it a bargain?"

"Nay, I will never leave thee," said the man with true devotion. "But yonder is my cot, and Dame Astrid will have the supper ready. Wilt thou not deign to rest and have a warm posset with us? Whilst thou art eating I will find a boat with which to cross the river."

Vasa accepted the proffered hospitality, and the two entered the hut where a warm fire blazed on the hearth, and where they were welcomed by Dame Astrid, a middle-aged woman with a kind, intelligent face. Her husband whispered some words in her ear, and then hurried without.

The woman gave the wanderer a seat by the fire and placed warm food before him, of which he partook freely. While he was satisfying his hunger there was a sudden sound of trampling hoofs outside the hut, and presently, with a loud clamor of voices, the door was thrown violently open and a troop of Danish soldiers entered.

Gustavus glanced apprehensively at his hostess and shrunk closer into the corner, but she whispered, "Do not fear, I will give my life for yours." Then she turned to obey the commands of her more recent guests.

"Haste thee, witch, and set on thy best, for this wild country of thine gives me an appetite like a bear's, and we have far to ride to-night," cried the leader of the party, a burly, red-haired Dane.

"Thou art welcome to all we have," said the woman, stirring round briskly. "What! to the lone figure by the hearth, 'art thou still lounging and eating here? Go to, serf, and close the barn and bring in the wood," and with

* A true incident. Like the Bruce and Peter the Great, Gustavus Vasa was possessed of extraordinary strength. The ax is still preserved.

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that she bestowed upon the amazed Vasa a buffet upon the ear that half staggered him. 'Dost thou here?'

The seeming churl arose and shuffled slowly out of doors, pathetically rubbing his ear, much to the amusement of the soldiers, who laughed loudly at his enforced retreat.

'He is a lazy lout,' explained the woman, 'and eats more every day than he is worth. I would not have him round an hour, but my husband thinks he is wonderfully clever. Men are such fools.'

'Cease, beldam,' said the Danish leadre; 'let us have less of thy clack and more of thy bounty. Hast no wine in thy sty for the king's troopers?'

'Here is wine of our own making,' she answered, bringing forward a bottle of ruby colored grape juice. 'It was pressed from grapes as long ago as when the good Svante Sture was regent.'

'It is the best wine we have tasted among thy inhospitable mountains,' declared one of the Danes, who seemed to be a keen judge. 'If thou hast another bottle, thou hadst better set it on.'

Dame Astired did as commanded, and so well did she play her little game, that she kept the Danes at the table for upwards of an hour, and when they at last departed they were in a condition approaching inebriation.

Meanwhile the bonder had succeeded in securing a boat, and long before the pursuing party had left the cottage he and Gustavus Vasa were safely across the river on the way to Falun, where the Dalecarlian chiefs had assembled with their followers. Before a week's time the uprising was general, and the fugitive was at the head of an army strong enough to face the Danish hordes. The result is well known.

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